

SENATE SHOULD PASS RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY PROTECTION ACT**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, this House passed H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act. The bill is currently in committee in the Senate and I would like to take this opportunity to urge our colleagues in the other house to pass this bill as soon as possible.

America is a secular democracy, a country where the religious rights of every citizen are protected by the Constitution. In many other countries, including some that call themselves secular and democratic, people do not enjoy these freedoms. We must do whatever we can to protect religious freedom for every American.

The Sikh religion requires Sikhs to have five symbols known as the "five Ks." The five Ks are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a bracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). These are required by the religion.

In a recent incident in Mentor, Ohio, outside Cleveland, a 69-year-old Sikh named Gurbachan Singh Bhatia was involved in a minor traffic accident. When the police arrived at the scene, a policeman saw Mr. Bhatia's kirpan (ceremonial sword). He was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. The case is scheduled to be heard in December. In a case in Cincinnati involving similar circumstances, the judge, the Honorable Mark Painter wrote, "To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, has been working to get the Religious Liberty Protection Act to protect the rights of Mr. Bhatia and all religious people of all faiths in America. No person should be harassed for his religious faith. He has written to Senator HATCH, who chairs the Judiciary Committee over there, and all members of the committee in support of this bill.

I call on the local authorities in Mentor to drop all charges against Mr. Bhatia and I also call on my colleagues over in the Senate to pass H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

I submit Dr. Aulakh's letter to Senator HATCH into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, October 7, 1999.

Hon. ORRIN HATCH,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO EXPEDITE PASSAGE OF
H.R. 1691 TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

DEAR SENATOR HATCH: On behalf of over 500,000 Sikhs, I am writing to you in support of H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

The Council of Khalistan represents the interests of the Sikh Nation in this country and worldwide. It was constituted by the Panthic Committee to represent the Sikh struggle for freedom. We have worked for the last 12 years in pursuit of this objective.

It is vitally important that the Religious Liberty Protection Act be reported out of committee and passed as soon as possible.

Charan Singh Kalsi of New Jersey was fired by the New York Transit Authority. The Transit Authority tried to force him to wear a hard hat instead of his turban, which he is required to wear as a symbol of his Sikh religion.

When a Sikh is baptized, he or she is required to have five symbols called the five Ks. They are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a bracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). These are required by the religion.

Recently in Mentor, Ohio, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, a 69-year-old Sikh, was involved in a minor traffic accident. The police were called to the scene of the accident. When the policeman saw Mr. Bhatia's kirpan (ceremonial sword), he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. He is currently scheduled to go to trial in December. In a similar case in Cincinnati, Judge Mark Painter wrote, "To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Mr. Bhatia and Mr. Kalsi are exercising their freedom of religion. The U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom to everyone. The Religious Liberty Protection Act will protect individuals like Gurbachan Singh Bhatia and Charan Singh Kalsi from being prosecuted and denied jobs for exercising their religious freedom. That is why this bill is so important.

On behalf of the Sikhs in America, I urge you to report the Religious Liberty Protection Act out so that it can be passed and become law as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

HONORING JUDGE MYRON
DONOVAN CROCKER**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Myron Donovan Crocker for his outstanding contributions to the community.

As long as there has been an Eastern District of California, there has been a Judge Myron Donovan Crocker. Judge Crocker was born in Pasadena on September 4, 1915 and was raised in Fresno. He attended Fresno schools and graduated from Fresno High School in 1933 and Fresno State College in 1937. He received his law degree from the University of California, Boalt Hall, in May of 1940. His first job was with the FBI in New York, first in Albany and then in New York City during World War II handling counter-espionage matters. Judge Crocker and his wife Elaine were married in New York while he was stationed there.

After the war ended, the FBI granted Crocker's request for a transfer closer to home and he was assigned to Los Angeles. In 1946, he entered private practice in Chowchilla and worked as Deputy District Attorney for Madera County. In 1951, he became Judge of the Chowchilla Justice Court, while continuing his private practice. He was appointed Superior Court Judge of Madera County in 1958, and remained there for only 1 year before his appointment to the Federal Bench.

Upon Judge Crocker's appointment to the Federal Bench on September 21, 1959, he

spent most of his time in Los Angeles and San Diego. At that time, the Federal court in Fresno was part of the Southern District of California. With redistricting in September, 1966, Judge Crocker became the Chief Judge of the Eastern District of California, and was the sole Federal judge in the Fresno district. His duties as Chief Judge included overseeing the completion of the Federal Courthouse in Fresno. Judge Crocker stepped down as Chief Judge in June 1967.

Although the caseload in Fresno grew quickly after redistricting, Judge Crocker still traveled frequently to sit on cases throughout the United States, including being in Washington, D.C. in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Judge Crocker remained the sole Federal judge in Fresno until 1979, when an additional judgeship was approved and Judge Edward D. Price was appointed. In 1981, Judge Crocker took Senior status and Judge Robert E. Coyle was appointed in his place. As a senior judge, Judge Crocker has continued to take cases and has made himself available for high profile cases outside his district.

Judge Crocker is held in highest esteem by his peers, staff and the legal community for his legal ability, demeanor, kindness, and fairness. As a colleague stated, "He is held in universal affectionate esteem."

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Judge Myron Donovan Crocker for his service to Fresno and the Eastern District of California on his 40th anniversary of service. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Judge Crocker many more years of continued success and happiness.

RECOGNIZING MARPLE NEWTOWN
CARING COALITION**HON. CURT WELDON**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to stand before you today to recognize the tireless and exemplary efforts of the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition. This organization brings together schools and the community as partners in order to work side-by-side for substance abuse prevention education.

During the week of October 23–27, the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition alongside numerous schools and community programs across the country will be participating in Red Ribbon Week. The goal behind Red Ribbon Week is to educate students of all ages from kindergarten through high school on the grave dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The Red Ribbon Campaign first originated in 1985 after the tragic death of Special Agent Enrique Camarena of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in the battle against drugs. Red Ribbons are worn by school students as a symbol of intolerance against drug use and a commitment to a drug-free lifestyle.

On October 25th, Marple Newtown Caring Coalition will proudly host the Red Ribbon Week Celebration in my Congressional District. The presentation will bring representatives from over 10 elementary and high schools together to promote substance abuse prevention. This gathering of students of all